



State of North Carolina
Office of the Governor

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**GOV. EASLEY SENDS ADDITIONAL SAFETY EQUIPMENT TO SOLDIERS
IN IRAQ**

Raleigh - Gov. Mike Easley today announced North Carolina is sending additional safety equipment to members of the N.C. National Guard's 30th Heavy Separate Brigade (HSB) to supplement the equipment they are already using on patrols in Iraq.

"When I spoke to the 30th Brigade at their deployment ceremony in February, I told the soldiers and their families that they were well trained and I promised them that we would help with any additional needs," said Easley. "At that time, I made a promise to Brig. Gen. Hickman to provide whatever additional supplies they needed to ensure the safety and security of our soldiers. He agreed to contact us once he got to Kuwait.

"The U.S. Army has supplied the authorized, basic equipment, but I feel a special obligation to our citizen soldiers in Iraq to provide for any additional needs so they have the equipment they need to protect themselves throughout this mission," said Easley.

"This equipment will make a difference in saving the lives of our soldiers," said Brig. Gen. Dan Hickman, brigade commander. "We are grateful to the state for these additional resources." In a call to Gov. Easley this morning, he also asked that North Carolinians continue to keep these soldiers in their prayers while they are deployed in Iraq.

The 30th HSB is the first full National Guard combat brigade activated and deployed for service in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. About 3,500 of the brigade's 4,800 soldiers are from North Carolina. Headquartered in Clinton, with armories in communities from Wilmington to Charlotte, the brigade also includes soldiers from West Virginia, New York, Illinois, Alabama, Ohio, Minnesota, Texas and California. The brigade shipped out to the Middle East in late February. The deployment was the state's largest since World War I.

The 30th HSB will receive handheld radios. They will also receive laptop computers, which will give more soldiers access to computers to help expedite planning, assignments and execution of their duties. The computers will also allow for more contact between soldiers and their families at home. The state is also sending additional body armor to be used to help make the military vehicles more bullet proof. Finally, the state is providing battery-operated flashing yellow lights to be used at nighttime checkpoints. The lights will help make the checkpoints more visible, improving safety for the soldiers manning the checkpoints and the Iraqi citizens using the roads.